Sad Little Lives Brightened in War Zone

Annette's Case Just One Reason Why French Victims of the Huns Believe That the American Red Cross Symbol Should Really Be a Star

By ELEANOR BOOTH SIMMONS.

Rescued children of the French war zone and the American doll which has taken the place of their lost treasures.

THE war will be won, the Boche will be beaten and sorrowful little French girls like Annette Dubois will grow up, it is to be hoped, into happier big girls and will marry (if there be men left to marry when the carnage is ended) and live peacefully once more in their homes and coax into fruitfulness the earth that is now so battle scarred and barren.

But—it seems as if, as long as it shall be remembered how those thousands of small Annettes and Jeannes and Maries have suffered, the enemy that caused that suffering must be hated.

Annette Dubois was 7 in August, 1914, the first hot week of that August when the Great War broke out. Seven carefree years she had lived with her mother, Mme. Dubois, and her older sister, Yvonne, and her brother Jean, who considered himself the man of the family, though he was such a stripling—lived in the comfortable little house in the gray stone village in Lorraine which had been the property of the Dubois family for generations.

War Parts Family.

A few miles away was that line made in 1870, dividing French from German Lorraine. But they were on the right side of the line, and though their hearts were often sore at the thought that the Kaiser should hold any part of their beloved province at least they never dreamed of his sending his abhorred soldiers over the line.

What should Annette, playing with her wooden doll, or Yvonne, meeting her lover and hemming linen for the wedding soon to be—what should Mme. Dubois or young Jean, tilling the garden and milking the cow and keeping the small family together—what should they know of the plottings of mad Emperors for the destruction of the unsuspicious world?

The blow fell. War was declared. Jean, barely 19 and boyish for his age, put on the uniform and marched away. Annette, lifting her wooden doll high to watch her brother, piped up "Vive la France!"

"Vive la France—à Strasbourg!" came back Jean's voice, with one backward look at the mother and sisters he was leaving to carry on at home.

Yvonne stood silent. In a few hours her lover also would go and tears, she knew, would come. Should she let her brother's last memory be of a girl with red eyes? Jamais! So she stood gripping her hands, while Mme. Dubois tried to speak cheerfully as she turned to attend to the cow and the litter of pigs.

"They will be back before Christmas," she comforted Yvonne. "The war will be over, and Jean and Pierre will return, and then there will be the wedding. Annette shall have a new dress for it. And the village, it will be gay, n'est ce pas?"

Annette Has to Flee.

In one way the village was gay during those first few weeks—gay with the fresh red and blue of the fine uniforms in which the poilus went to the war. They filled the village, those French troops, and Annette, her wooden doll under one arm, would pick flowers and timidly present them to the men in the clothes like those Jean wore when he marched away. Eagerly Mme. Dubois and Yvonne watched for the communiqués from the front that was so near, as the battle raged on the Marne, and they trembled for Jean and Pierre.

The battle came close, first the French swept forward, then the Germans, beating their way on, menaced the little gray stone village, and Mme. Dubois and Yvonne, with dry eyes, packed up such things as they could carry themselves and could pack on the back of the cow, and, with Annette and the wooden doll, they fled over the dusty roads cut out by the motor trains carrying munitions—fled to the home of an old aunt, in another of France's tiny red roofed villages, further from the front.

They stayed there till Christmas. The holiday did not bring Jean and Pierre, nor the end of the war, but it pushed the Germans further from the village of Mme. Dubois, and she decided to go back.

"Jean and Pierre will wish to find us at home," she said. "The garden must be attended to; surely the war cannot last all summer, and everything must be ready for them when they return."

So Yvonne and her mother and even little Annette worked to straighten up the house, in which troops had been quartered, and to prepare the garden for planting, and to get fodder for the cow so that Jean might find her sleek. And one wonderful day came a small French boy with a telegram from Pierre, saying that he could get a week's *permission*, and would Yvonne marry him then?

Yvonne would. A wedding half sorrowful, half joyous, they had in the little stone church. Not many people were left in the village to attend that wedding, and Annette didn't have her new dress, but Yvonne and Pierre promised her one directly the war should be over.

"And that," they said hopefully, "will be by harvest time, certainement."

The wedding was at Eastertide. The harvest that came was a harvest of death, and Pierre was one cut down by the reaper. Yvonne, living on with her mother and Annette in the little front line village, was very silent when the official notice came—"Killed in action." Only she said often to her mother that she hoped the baby was to be a boy.

"So he can have Pierre's name," she explained.

Mme. Dubois had gone to work in a munition factory to eke out what little money the French Government paid them in allocations. As the munitions industry developed in those border towns where there is much iron and coal, they became increasingly dangerous places to live in. The German airplanes came in greater and yet greater numbers, dropping bombs in their pleasant way on the streets where children, like Annette, had been wont to play without fear in the days before the war. One day there was an esperially heavy bombardment; several of the villagers, lifetime neighbors of Mme. Dubois, were killed; the cow that was the chief dependence of the family was killed in her shed; the very air shuddered with frightfulness. And the next day Yvonne's boy baby, who was to have had Pierre's name, was born dead.

Mme. Dubois Injured.

More silent than ever was Yvonne, but she struggled up from bed, and she went to work in the munitions factory, while Mme. Dubois stayed home to tend the garden, on which they now relied for food. Annette, growing grave and unchildlike under the shadows around her, helped to weed and water. A summer and a winter had passed since the wedding; another summer had come. The long range guns of the Germans were, about this time, focussed on the village, but Mme. Dubois and Yvonne decided to remain. Jean had been wounded, not seriously; they wished to be where the very first news of him would come. Why flee from the war in which all they loved was swallowed up? Besides, their money was very little, and having their own house and garden made what they had go much further.

Now in France a family's holdings of land will often be in several small parcels, in different parts of the town. So it chanced that Mme. Dubois owned one small strip near the railroad track, about a mile from her home. She resolved to cultivate this. She was not used to doing the heavy work herself, but now it was necessary, and every day she went to work there. The railroad was the mark at which the German shells were aimed, and one hot July day, as she hoed her potatoes, the sweat rolling down her face, came a great shell and gouged a deep hole in the patch, scattering the dirt over Mme. Dubois and smearing her wet face.

The nearest shelter was a supply train that had been lying for two days on the track near by. She ran for it, she crawled under one of the cars. And by tragic chance, at that moment the order was given to move the train along out of range. Madame was dragged many yards, and left bleeding, unconscious, when the rumbling cars passed on.

American Help Comes.

It was now that the Americans came into the life of the French woman who, hitherto, had struggled along, with only her own courage and the scant aid the French Government could give, through the strange paths into which war had driven her. It was a poilu who found her there by the railroad track when the bombardment had passed by and it was a French military doctor who came to see her. But finding that she needed long hospital treatment he telephoned to Toul, behind the American front, where an American flag floated over a former military school which had become an American Red Cross hospital for French children of the war zone and for emergency cases.

Mme. Dubois was conscious when the doctors at Toul examined her mangled leg and arm, and her first thought was of Annette, alone at home with her wooden doll; for Yvonne was at the munitions factory.

"I must not die," she told the Red Cross nurse. "My elder daughter has lost her husband and baby. My little girl is too young to earn her living. My son in the army is wounded. Could you take care of my little girl while there is no one at home to cook for her?"

Well, and so it happened that Annette was brought into a life more cheerful than she had known since the war began. For at Toul was a place for just such small war refugees as she. The Red Cross colony at Toul was started for some 400 children under 8, who had been sent away from their homes because of frequent gas attacks; they were too little to be trusted to keep their gas masks on.

The number had grown to 550, as more and more villages became dangerous for children, and eventually 160 hospital beds were added. Then the American doctors spread chains of dispensaries fanwise from Toul over the hills of French Lorraine, to which their gray automobiles carried them several times a week to the clinics for mothers and babies in the smoky mining and factory towns. And in one of these automobiles the little Annette and her wooden doll were carried to her mother in the hospital—a wondering, grave faced Annette, sadder than any child should ever be.

Fatter and gayer and better dressed is Annette now than when she arrived, a queer little figure in her old shawl with her bundle clutched under her arm. The doctors found that time and care would save Mme. Dubois's leg, though her arm would have to come off below the elbow. But Jean, who recovered from his wound, got a week's *permission* and spent it with her, and the nurses let him stay all day with her in the ward, telling her about his life in the trenches, and planning how they would clear up the garden and buy another cow and start all fresh some day when the war was over. Evenings he would play with Annette, who used to run in at lunch time and at recess of the school to see her mother and comb her hair for her.

Mme. Dubois has only one fault to find with the Red Cross—she thinks its emblem ought to be a star.

"The Americans have put the star of hope into our lives," she told the doctor who tended her. "The Americans have saved my life; and now I can work again. Yvonne and I can go on now till Jean comes back from the war. You should put a star above the cross, Monsieur."

The Sense of Smell

IT is said that the tenth part of a grain of musk will continue for years to fill a room with its odoriferous particles, and that at the end of that time it will not be appreciably diminished in weight.

A cubic inch of air arising from the flame of a Bunsen burner has been estimated to contain no fewer than 480,000,000 dust particles.

A drop of blood that might be suspended from the point of a needle contains about 1,000,000 red corpuscles.

Yet, although matter is so marvellously divisible, the olfactory nerves are infinitely more sensitive. Much yet remains to be investigated with reference to these nerves which will discriminate with such apparently miraculous accuracy.